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ABSTRACT

Designed for use in Iowa elementary schools, this unit introduces students to Iowa's Amana Colonies. Four lessons cover the history and cultural heritage of the colonies, daily life in historical times, daily life in modern times, and the colonies as a corporate museum. Throughout the lessons, emphasis is placed on the values and organization of cooperative communities. Student activities include film viewing, comparison of the Amana colonies with other communal settlements, role playing, the baking of traditional foods, and the study of the colonies as a production unit. The document is one of a collection of materials from the Iowa Area Education Agency 7 Teacher Center Project. (LP)

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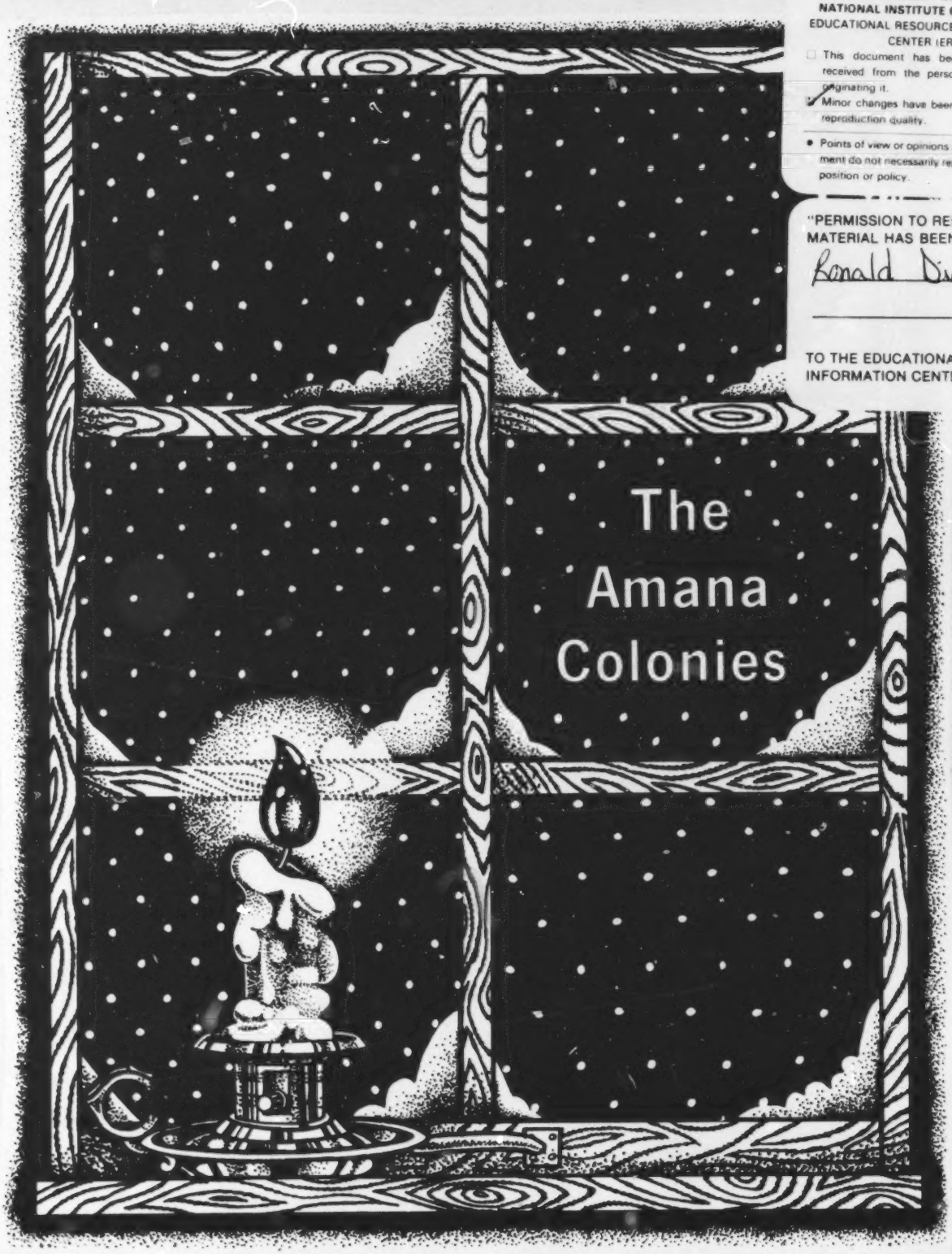

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AREA EDUCATION AGENCY 7

Cedar Falls, Iowa

Document title: The Amana Colonies

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THE AMANA COLONIES

Objectives:

1. The students will gain an awareness of the history of the Amana colonies.
2. The students will be able to describe the roles of individuals and families in an early commune.
3. The students will understand that the museum towns of Amana help preserve certain aspects of communal life.
4. The students will gain an awareness of the reason the people of Amana chose to become assimilated into the mainstream of American life.

LESSON I. INTRODUCTION AND HISTORY

How many of you have been to Amana? What do you think of when you hear about the Amana colonies?

The people who first settled in Amana came from Germany in the 1800's. The name Amana is a term from the Bible which means "believe faithfully." These people came from a German religious group or sect called the Pietists which based its beliefs on a very personalized religion. In 1714 Johann Rock and Eberhard Gruber preached that God could reveal His wishes to man through inspired persons or prophets, and they called themselves the Community of True Inspiration. The German name for the prophets was "werkzeuge." When these two men died the sect declined in membership until the 19th century when prophets Christian Herz and Barbara Heineman began to attract followers. Ronneburg, a

town in Germany, became the center for their group. About this time economic conditions became very bad in Europe, as did religious intolerance, and members of the group decided to emigrate. To finance the trip those who belonged contributed all their money and property. They felt that this worked very well as a way of life, and they decided to continue to hold all property in common and to become a communal society as well as a religion.

The group first went to Seneca, New York where they bought 5000 acres from the Seneca Indians and formed the town of Ebenezer. Two groups later went to Canada. The growth of the city of Buffalo threatened their peace so they moved to Iowa. They bought 18,000 acres of land in the Iowa River valley in 1859, and by 1861 seven villages had been built. The villages are seven miles apart, which is the distance an oxcart could travel in one day. The villages were grouped in the European pattern with a central village and surrounding farm land. The seven villages are Amana, West Amana, South Amana, High Amana, Middle Amana, East Amana and Homestead.

Procedure:

Show the filmstrip Amana Colonies by the Joint County Schools, Cedar Rapids, 1971. (This is AEA 7's strip #6282.) It contains a good overview. Discuss.

Activities:

1. Have the children look up information on Amana in books from the attached bibliography and in encyclopedias.
2. Have the children look up information on other communal settlements in Iowa. (See the Posten book.)

3. Locate the Amana settlements on a map. Also locate Buffalo, New York and have the children trace a probable travel route. Also have them locate some of the other settlements they find.

4. Have the children find out what modern communes are like.

Conclusion:

Help the children conclude that the True Inspirationists came to the United States for economic and religious reasons.

LESSON II. COMMUNAL LIFE OF AMANA

Yesterday we learned that the followers of Christian Metz and Barbara Heineman came to the United States because of religious intolerance as well as difficult economic conditions. Today we will learn how they lived together as a community in the seven villages. The common bond was religion, and the purpose of everything done was to maintain the community.

In order to maintain the community only utilitarian (useful) things were allowed, and everything had to contribute to the common good. People wore simple dark clothing. The women wore black caps, neckerchiefs and aprons. The men wore dark clothing and wide-brimmed hats. All meals were served in the community kitchen buildings. Families had individual houses, but these contained only bedrooms and sitting rooms. The old, ill, and the very young were allowed to eat in the house on a table in the sitting room.

The people of Amana worked at trades or crafts for which they had apprenticed as young people. One continued in this particular

job all his/her life. They might be farmers, weavers, butchers and sausage makers, bakers or cooks. The society cared for all its members so people did not have to be concerned about food, insurance, etc. Most people were very hard workers, but there were a few who did not work. They were cared for in spite of this, because it was a society belief.

In the church men sat on the right side and the somen on the left. The leaders or elders sat at a table in the front. The church was the center of community life. There were three "levels" of church to which you could belong, and this was based on your "goodness" or piety. The old and very devout belonged to First Church, and the children and married people with children belonged to the Third Church which was reserved for the less holy. German was the language in which services were conducted until 1961. There were 11 church services per week.

The early Amana community was almost completely self-sufficient. The members contributed their skills so almost everything they used was produced locally, except for pottery. They sold some products to the outside world for the money they needed for salt, sugar, seeds and machines. As was mentioned earlier, everything was meant to maintain the community so artistic expression was not encouraged, though it was not repressed. The expression usually took the form of handiwork. The women did some beautiful sewing. These were useful items, but beautifully crafted.

Each village had its own school, and school was held six days a week. At age 13 the girls left school to work in the kitchen and gardens. The boys left at 14 to pursue a craft or to farm.

Procedure:

1. Show and discuss the filmstrip Seven Villages, The Amana Story, Part I. At Hudson this is housed in the High School Library. It has more details than you may want, but it is a good historical overview.

   OR

2. Read the pages from This is the Place, Iowa by Posten, pp. 275-279. (See bibliography.)

   OR

3. Use opaque and share pictures from The Palimpsest, March, 1963.

Activities:

1. Share the reports that are completed.
2. Role play. Divide into groupd and use the cards which are included on a separate page.
3. Make Oatmeal Raisin Bread as per attached recipe.
4. Do the crossword.

Conclusion:

Help the class understand that everything in the community was done for the good of the group.

LESSON III. MODERN AMANA

Yesterday we learned about how the people in the Amanas functioned as a community which was bound together by religion. We also learned that everything that was done had to be for the good of the community. Today we will see how and why the group became integrated into Modern Iowa.

The people of the Amana villages were prosperous and content, and lived well. About the time the automobile became common in Iowa (the 1920's) things began to change. People from "outside" began to come into the villages, and the Amana colonists began to see how life was different outside. Some of the community people began to accumulate money for themselves so they could buy the luxuries from outside. They tended to lose interest in working for the community. There were no longer any inspired prophets to speak for the community, and the young men were not interested in becoming elders. There was a bad fire in the flour mill, and the depression came. On June 1, 1932 the community voted to give up communal living, and it became a corporation. Stock was issued to each member. Now people own their own shops and land, and those who are employed in the villages are paid. The industries are successful and operating profitably. Amana Refrigeration provides employment for many people. Furniture, meat, baked products, wine, the woolen mill and restaurants featuring German foods are all profitable businesses. (One of these restaurants is the Ronneburg. Remember that word from Day 1? Ronneburg was the city in Germany that became the center of the True Inspirationists religion.)

Procedure:

1. Show and discuss the filmstrip, Seven Villages, the Amana Story, Part II. (In Hudson this is housed in the High School Library also.)

   OR

2. Project some of the pictures from the Library Vertical File with the opaque and discuss the above background material. You may also project from the March, 1963 Palimpsest or The Amana Today booklet.

Activities:

1. Have the children find out more about some of the products of present day Amana.
2. List as many things as you can that are different in modern Amana and early Amana.
3. Write a brief story about life in Amana, past or present.
4. List 5 words you did not know before this unit.
5. List as many ways as you can in which the Amish and the Amana colonies are alike. Different.
6. Do the crossword if this was not used before. It serves as a bit of a review.

Conclusion:

Help the children realize that the people of Amana decided to become a corporation because of outside influence on its residents.

LESSON IV. AMANA AS A MUSEUM COMMUNITY

Yesterday we learned that the Amana Colonies had to become a corporation in 1932 to survive. Today we will learn how modern Amana survives as a museum community.

The Amanas were designated as a National Historic Landmark by the Department of Interior. To be placed on this National Register of Historic Places means that the building or site can never be changed or eliminated. This is, therefore, a method by which something with historic value can be preserved. There are several areas which the Department evaluates. One consideration is that the place must be associated with an event that made a significant contribution to the pattern of our broad history. The building or site must remain virtually unchanged since its origination. The history of the area must be authenticated. This means that historical documents must be available which detail the history without a break in the time span covered. It isn't always age that is a part of the determination. If the building or site is truly unique it may be considered. One building for which uniqueness was important is the Ice House Museum in Cedar Falls. The Amanas were partially included because of their uniqueness. Complete sections of cities which have historical significance may also be listed. Some cities in the East have blocks that are sites unique unto themselves and are included.

The Amana Colonies Historical Site includes the original seven villages which comprised the Amana Society and the surrounding countryside. In a trip through the area the visitor can see such things as a general store which looks as it did in the nineteenth century and sells old-fashioned merchandise. There is also a woolen mill and shop, wineries, restaurants, a museum which is housed in a reconstructed old "heim" (home), meat market

and furniture and clock factories. There is a museum operated by the non-profit Amana Heritage Society called the Museum of Amana History, as well as a second one called the Amana Society Farm Museum. In the villages one can also see working barns and granaries, the community kitchen which has been preserved intact, an open hearth bakery, and a cooper shop where wine barrels were made. As you can determine from this description enough of the past has been preserved to make the entire community a museum which also illustrates for the visitor a bit of what early Iowa was like.

Procedure:

1. Project with an opaque projector from "The Amana Today" booklet if this was not used before.

   OR

2. Use the filmstrip Seven Villages, the Amana Story, Part II.
3. Share pictures from Iowan magazines using the opaque.

Activities:

1. As a culminating activity make this an early Amana-early Iowa day. Pick a recipe from the Ronneburg Recipe Album (see bibliography), and either make it in class, or involve parents and have the cooking done at home. If possible, have the children bring antiques used in farming or the home to demonstrate how early Iowans live. Also ask the children to bring examples of products which have been obtained in Amana to display. Make your own Museum Community for a day.

Conclusion:

1. Help the children realize that the preservation of the entire Amana area is what makes it a museum community.
2. Help the children realize that Amana shows us something of what the life of other early Iowans was like.

EVALUATION

True or False

T F 1. The people who came to Amana came from Germany.

T F 2. The people who lived in Amana called themselves the Community of the True Faith.

T F 3. Ronneburg is a town in Iowa.

T F 4. Eight villages make up the Amana colonies in Iowa.

T F 5. The people of Amana were very artistic and made many beautiful paintings and other works of art.

T F 6. There were 3 levels of church to which the people of Amana could belong.

Multiple Choice

____1. The name of one of the leaders who came from Germany was

a. Johann Gutenberg
b. Christian Metz
c. Jacob Amman
d. Johann Schmitt

____2. The Community of True Inspiration was established in Iowa in

a. 1910 b. 1714 c. 1859 d. 1932

____3. Another of the leaders who came from Germany was

a. Barbara Heineman
b. Mother Cabrini
c. Margaret Mead
d. Mother Teresa

____4. The name "Amana" means

a. The Prophets
b. goodness
c. I believe
d. believe faithfully

____5. The Amana colonies converted to capitalism and became a corporation in

a. 1932 b. 1910 c. 1859 d. 1781

Key

True or False

1. T 4. F
2. F 5. F
3. F 6. T

Multiple Choice

1. b 4. d
2. c 5. a
3. a

Role Playing Cards

1. You are all part of the group who work in the communal kitchens at Amana. What are the kinds of things you would do each day. Show us.

2. You are young men, adult men and boys of Amana. What are the kinds of work you would do each day? Show us.

3. Pretend it is Sunday and you are attending church. Remember there are 3 churches, the First, Second and Third. Take the parts of adult men, women, children and old people. Which church will you be in and what will you do? Show us.

4. It is Spring, 1932. You are a part of the voting group of Amana. The group is discussing whether or not to continue as a communal group. Pretend you are part of it, and give arguments for or against continuing as a commune. Let one person be leader of the group.

Bread Recipe

Oatmeal Raisin Bread

Beat 1 egg until light. Add ½ C sugar and beat until fluffy. Add 1 C buttermilk and ½ C molasses and mix well.

Sift together 1-1/3 C flour
½ tsp salt
1 tsp soda
Add to egg mixture

Add 1 C oatmeal
½ C chopped nuts (optional)
1 C raisins
Stir just to combine

Fold in ¼ C melted shortening.

Bake in greased wax paper-lined 9x5x3 loaf pan or two 7½x3½x2¼ loaf pans.

Bake at 350° 50-60 minutes.

From The Ronneburg Recipe Album by Elsie Oehler, Amana, Iowa.

Crossword Clues

Down

1 Another name for inspired persons was _____.

3 Church services are conducted in the _____ language.

5 _____ _____ was one of the leaders of the True Inspirationists when they came to the United States.

8 A society in which all the members of the group work for the good of the group is called a _____ society.

11 The chosen people or prophets were also called _____ in German.

14 _____ is a word that means "believe faithfully".

Across

2 _____ was the city in Germany which became the center for the True Inspirationists.

4 There are _____ churches. You went to these on the basis of your goodness.

6 One of the seven villages is _____.

7 The Department of Interior designated the Amana colonies as a historic _____.

9 _____ _____ is another of the seven villages.

10 _____ _____ is yet another of the villages.

12 The main village of the Amana colonies is called _____.

13 _____ _____ was a leader of the True Inspirationists when they came to the United States also.

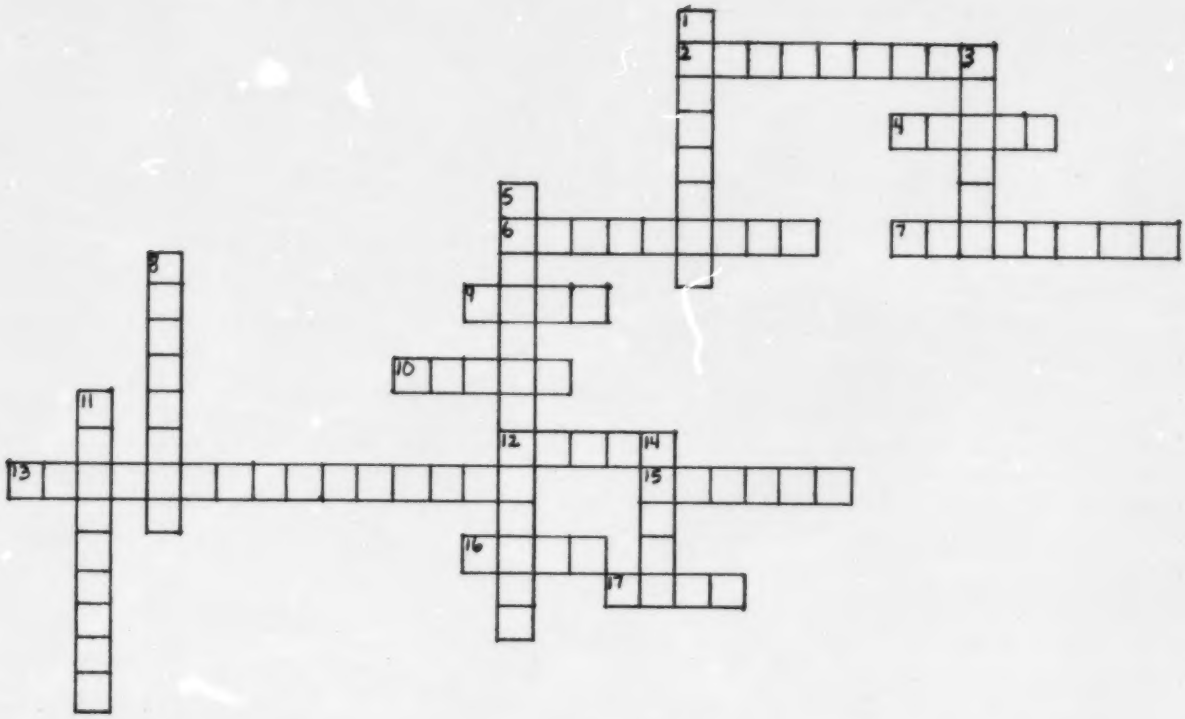
15 _____ Amana is another of the seven villages.

16 _____ Amana is the sixth of the villages.

17 The last of the villages is _____ Amana.

Words to choose from:

Christian Metz	Homestead	German
Three	West (Amana)	Ronneburg
werkzeuge	Middle (Amana)	communal
High (Amana)	prophets	Amana
Amana	East (Amana)	landmark
Barbara Heineman	South (Amana)	



ANSWERS:

Across:

2 Ronneburg
4 three
6 homestead
7 landmark
9 High
10 South
12 Amana
13 Barbara Heineman
15 Middle
16 West
17 East

Down:

1 prophets
3 German
5 Christian Metz
8 communal
11 Werkzeuge
14 Amana

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AV Materials

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Seven Villages, The Amana Story, Part I & Part II. American Pageant Films, 1977. 2 filmstrips, 2 cassettes.

Vertical File Folder entitled Iowa. This is any pamphlet material, and clippings. Check your own school or public library.

Booklet

The Amanas Today, 7 Historic Iowa Villages.

Demonstrations

People will come to demonstrate weaving. Contact

Spinners and Weavers Guild, 233-2660 or 266-5910

or

Jackie Betts, 108 Pershing, Waterloo, Iowa

The school must provide one meal and mileage.